

A G E N D A



Recommendation for Council Action

Austin City Council	Item ID	10407	Agenda Number	34.
---------------------	---------	-------	---------------	-----

Meeting Date:	11/3/2011	Department:	Watershed Protection
---------------	-----------	-------------	----------------------

Subject

Approve a resolution authorizing the City Manager to prepare and submit an application to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service for a 10(a)(1)(B) Incidental Take permit for the endangered Barton Springs Salamander (*Eurycea sosorum*) and the Austin Blind Salamander (*Eurycea waterlooensis*) in anticipation of its listing as endangered. The permit will apply to Barton Springs and adjacent springs located in Zilker Park through 2033.

Amount and Source of Funding

Fiscal Note

A fiscal note is not required.

Purchasing Language:	
Prior Council Action:	The City of Austin's current 10(a)(1)(B) incidental take permit was issued to the Mayor by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 1998.
For More Information:	Chris Herrington, 974-2840; Tom Nelson, 974-9337; Mitzi Cotton, 974-2179
Boards and Commission Action:	No board actions associated with this item. The Environmental Board and Park and Recreation Board were given briefings by staff on the proposed permitting process in August 2011.
MBE / WBE:	
Related Items:	

Additional Backup Information

Barton Springs is the designated habitat of the endangered Barton Springs Salamander (*Eurycea sosorum*) and the threatened Austin Blind Salamander (*Eurycea waterlooensis*). The federal Endangered Species Act section 10(a)(1)(B) requires a permit for any actions that may result in the "Take," defined as harm or harassment, of endangered species. The City of Austin must have a 10(a)(1)(B) incidental take permit from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for the continued operation and maintenance of Barton Springs as a swimming pool, and to conduct scientific activities associated with the salamanders. The City's current 10(a)(1)(B) permit was issued in 1998 and expires in October 2013. The proposed new permit will cover City's activities in designated salamander habitat thru 2033.

Watershed Protection Department, Parks and Recreation Department and Law Department staff are now updating the Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) for the Barton Springs Salamander, which will also include the Austin Blind Salamander. The draft HCP is available for review and comment by the public on the Watershed Protection

Department website, and a public meeting was held in October 2011 at Barton Springs. A draft of the updated HCP will be submitted to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service along with an application for a new 10(a)(1)(B) permit in January 2012. Because of the long, iterative HCP review process by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the application must be submitted in January 2012 to ensure that a new permit is issued before the current permit expires, allowing continuous operation of Barton Springs Pool. The new HCP will include the Austin Blind Salamander in anticipation of its listing and will reflect the advances in scientific knowledge and successful conservation measures made by City staff since the current HCP was approved.

More information, including copies of the current Habitat Conservation Plan and links to related information on the US Fish and Wildlife Service website is available on the web:
http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/watershed/salamander_guidelines.htm